Moral Self-Identity and Character Development

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Abstract

Moral development is a kind of sociopersonality development that has as its aim the disposition to virtue. The developmental grounding of moral personality is in the first months of life that include neurobiological foundations, the mutual responsive orientation and dialogic socialization of the moral self. We argue that moral self-identity offers integrative possibilities for understanding the lifespan development of moral personality; and for understanding the dispositional and motivational bases of moral behavior; and that social cognitive theory has resources for understanding how the moral self and conscience of infancy is canalized into individual and cultural differences in the schedule and priority of character strengths that are the targets of socialization. Moral self-identity and character is placed in the historical context of the moral stage theory paradigm.

Key Words: Virtue, Self, Identity, Character, Personality, Conscience, Culture, Neurobiology, Disposition, Epigenetics, Niche , Kohlberg, Stage

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An Epiphany

In the late 1980s the first author (Lapsley) was guest at the wedding of one of his former undergraduate students. At the reception he was seated at a family table next to the groom's aunt, who quite amiably struck up a conversation about the usual small matters that govern topics of first acquaintance. Where was he from? How did he know her nephew? What did he do? She was not surprised to learn that Lapsley was a psychology professor at Notre Dame as her nephew was an alumnus and a psychology major. But most unexpectedly she drilled down a bit further to ask what he studied, what his research was about. Very general answers ("adolescent development") typically suffice over the dinner table, but the inquisitive aunt would not be put off with generalities but insisted on more detail. So he said, "Well, I also study moral development." Her eyes lit up with wonder. "*Moral* development," she exclaimed, "that is *so interesting*."

She went on to say how badly kids need moral development these days and would he please tell her all the fascinating things that have been learned about it. So Lapsley recounted the received view on Kohlberg's paradigm, which was still regnant at the time. Moral judgment goes through stages of development. Stage reasoning is revealed by interviewing children about hypothetical moral dilemmas. The most famous dilemma concerns a character named Heinz who must decide whether to steal a cancer-curing drug (discovered by a *pharmacist,* no less) to save his wife. But, as it turns out, it doesn't much matter whether one thinks Heinz should or should not steal the drug, what matters is the quality of reasoning, how it is organized; although, that said, at the highest stage there is consensus that Heinz should steal the drug. This is because at the highest stage there is better appreciation of certain Kantian considerations regarding the categorical and prescriptive nature of moral judgements; and a greater tendency to explicitly test one's moral reasoning with procedural justice checks and to reason from the original position. Of course Lapsley did not fail to mention that hardly anyone reaches the final stage and the sequence doesn't even start until age 10 so that almost all of childhood is excluded from moral stage considerations. But he was keen to underscore a most important point that at the

principled level of moral reasoning there are intellectual grounds for rejecting ethical relativism, and isn't that a relief.

But as Lapsley was going through the desiderata of moral stage theory, he could sense a change coming over his interlocutor from genuine interest to polite bewilderment. Her eyes seemed to glaze over in disbelief. This was not what she was expecting. She was expecting some account of what worries parents like her the most, which is how to raise children of a certain kind -- children who are in trait possession of virtues, children whose behavior is guided by a finely-calibrated moral compass. She was expecting a disquisition on moral character. Yet Kohlberg's theory was silent on these matters; and watching her wan reaction to an account of moral stage theory was an epiphany, for it illustrated just how far the preoccupations of the field had strayed from ordinary moral sensibility. The issues that galvanized moral development research ---stage, sequence, *structures d'ensemble,* the specter of ethical relativism and how to defeat it -- elide the concerns of parents. It is not what they have in mind when it comes to moral socialization and how to raise children of good moral character.

Of course, lay understanding is not the proper metric for appraising scientific theory, and the point of this anecdote is not to diminish Kohlberg's enormous intellectual achievement or the game-changing contribution of moral stage theory to the evolution of developmental science. Indeed, as will be evident below, many accounts of moral development, including our own, take place against the background of Kohlberg's magisterial contribution to the field. Yet the lead author's epiphany was the realization that so much more work still has to be done in the study of moral development; that the focus on the ontogenesis of justice reasoning is but a narrow gaze on a vast terrain of topics, some of which are the topic of this chapter, others the topic of this Handbook.

Looking Back

A lot has changed since the epiphany at the wedding banquet. Over the last three decades the field of moral development has undergone a remarkable transformation, marked by a proliferation of topics, methods and theories (Lapsley & Carlo, 2014). Yet, as noted earlier, there was a time when the field of moral development had a univocal meaning and a shared problematic that organized the work of generations of scholars. From roughly the time of Lawrence Kohlberg's legendary 1958 doctoral dissertation through the remaining four decades of the twentieth century, developmental science was both inspired and convulsed by the consensus and controversy over the six-stage theory of moral judgment. Indeed, Kohlberg's cognitive developmental approach to socialization was the leading edge of research, and mastering canonical works like *Stage and Sequence* (Kohlberg, 1969) and *From Is to Ought* (Kohlberg, 1971) was a right-of-passage for many developmental scholars, just as discussing Heinz's famous dilemma became a set-piece in university and high-school classes alike.

Yet stage theories, once common, are now on the margins across wide swaths of developmental science, particularly stage models (like Kohlberg's) that insisted upon invariant sequence and holistic moral-cognitive structures (*structures d'ensemble*) as defining criteria of developmental change. This exacting position on stages was hard to vindicate empirically; and fending off putative refutation of the structure-and-sequence of justice reasoning led to many revisions of theory and methods, putting the Kohlberg research program on its heels and forcing it into a defensive crouch from which it has not recovered.

In addition to the disappointing empirical record, the diminution of Kohlberg's project can also be traced to its inability to profit from theoretical and empirical advances in allied research programs (Lapsley, 2005). Research on selfhood and identity, for example, or on the dispositional constructs of personality psychology, or on emotions, were often ruled out of bounds because these literatures could not deliver what was wanted most, which was a way to defeat ethical relativism on empirical grounds. Indeed, the very motivation of the moral stage research program was to provide the psychological resources to show that moral judgments are not relative, that there was a criterion by which certain judgments could be appraised as adequate or deficient, and this criterion was a developmental one. It was only at the principled level of moral reasoning, for example, where one could best appreciate the prescriptive and categorical nature of a moral principle and its universalizable intent.

But this single-minded focus limited the options for meaningful theoretical integration. By linking the empirical project of identifying advanced levels of deontic reasoning to the philosophical project of defeating ethical relativism, the Kohlberg team was led to a strategic decision to view some areas of psychological research suspect if they could not carry the fight to ethical relativists. As a result, moral stage theory would become increasingly isolated from advances in allied psychological literatures; and hence was ill-prepared to forge integrative linkages to help it tame recalcitrant data.

This broad historical sketch of the research tradition suggests that the marginalization of moral stage theory, indeed, of Piagetian theory more generally, has encouraged the contemporary renaissance of moral development theory and research. If the very term 'moral development' once pointed almost exclusively to the cognitive developmental paradigm and to Kohlberg's moral stage tradition, in fact moral development now includes a wider range of topics than was common in the formative decades of the research tradition. The present Handbook attests to the rich diversity of topics now being investigated under the heading of moral development.

The Present Chapter

In this chapter, we take up character development and various options for understanding the moral dimensions of personality. That moral rationality attaches to selves who have personalities and character is a notion so commonplace that it is a genuine surprise that it has only recently attracted significant interest in psychology (Hardy & Carlo, 2011; Jennings, Mitchell & Hannah, 2015; Lapsley & Hardy, 2017; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009), although philosophical reflection on moral personality is of longer standing (Flanagan, 1991; Flanagan & Rorty, 1990). One reason for its relative absence from the literature is that character was one of those topics eschewed by the Kohlberg tradition because the language of traits and individual differences could not vindicate the universality of morality. After all, as Kohlberg and Mayer (1972, p. 479) famously put it

> Labeling a set of behaviors displayed by a child with positive or negative trait terms does not signify that they are of adaptive or ethical importance. It represents an appeal to particular community conventions, since one person's '*integrity*' is another person's '*stubbornness'* [one person's] *'honesty'* in expressing your true feelings is another person's '*insensitivity*' to the feelings of others.

Another reason is that the machinery of stages in the cognitive developmental tradition does not countenance ("aretaic") judgments about the moral worthiness of persons. This is because stages, for Piaget, are descriptive taxonomic categories that classify formal "morphological" properties of children's thinking on an epistemic level. Much the way a biologist might classify various species of mollusks on the basis of their structural characteristics, so too are forms of thought differentiated on the basis of structural properties. The resulting taxonomy is a stage sequence that describes species of knowledge, varieties and kinds of mental operations, and not different kinds of persons (Chapman, 1988).

Similarly, in the moral domain, stages describe variations in the formal structural properties of sociomoral reflection, and not individual differences among persons. Moral stages are not, after all, "boxes for classifying and evaluating persons" (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs & Lieberman, 1983, p.11). Moral stages permit no aretaic judgment about moral competence, make no evaluative claim about character, say nothing about virtue, and are silent about the moral features of personality and selfhood. Instead, the moral developmental stages, like Piagetian stages of cognitive development, describe forms of thought-organization of an ideal rational moral agent and therefore cannot be "reflections upon the self" (Kohlberg, Levine & Hewer, 1983, p. 36).

Yet when most people think about the moral life and what is important about moral formation, they have in mind certain dispositions to do the right thing, to be a person of a certain kind. Parents want to raise children of good character, children who exhibit dispositions that are desirable and praiseworthy. They want their children to be prosocial, honest, fair, compassionate, sensitive to the needs of others. Indeed, in a recent survey there was widespread agreement that *responsibility* and *helping others* are important targets of socialization by American parents (Pew Research Center, 2014). Moreover, the virtues deemed important to cultivate will likely vary by historical epoch (Brinkman, 2010; MacIntrye,

1984), by national culture or religion (Li, 2005; Shek ,Yu & Fu, 2013; van Oudenhoven, deRaad, Carmona, Helbig & van der Linden, 2012) or, in the case of the Pew Research Center (2014) survey, by ideological (conservative-liberal) commitments and even by demographic membership (SES category or age). Although moral stage theory may be reluctant to make aretaic judgments about the moral status of persons, the language of moral valuation comes easily to most everyone else (Lapsley, 1996).

In this chapter, we argue that the goal of moral development is the formation of persons. Moral development is a kind of sociopersonality development that has as its aim the disposition to virtue; and the developmental grounding of moral personality is in the first months of life. Indeed, the field of moral development is increasingly focused on its earliest foundation in infancy (Lapsley & Carlo, 2014), including the neurobiological foundations of moral dispositions laid down in the "evolved developmental niche" of the early rearing environment (Narvaez, 2014). We argue that moral self-identity offers integrative possibilities for understanding the lifespan development of moral personality; and for understanding the dispositional and motivational bases of moral behavior (Blasi, 2005; Hardy & Carlo, 2005).

In the next section we review various ways to understand the dispositional features of personal character; and note some ways that virtues are shaped by culture. Then we examine the early developmental roots of moral character and examine a social-cognitive theory of moral self-identity. We conclude with suggestions for future research.

Whither Character, Virtues and Culture

Character is derived from a Greek word that means "to mark" as on an engraving. One's character is an indelible mark of consistency and predictability. It denotes enduring dispositional tendencies in behavior. It points to something deeply rooted in personality, to its organizing principle that integrates behavior, attitudes and values in ways that dispose one to self-consistent action across situations. Of course, individuals can and do act in ways that are 'out of character,' and there is robust debate concerning the globality or specificity of moral dispositional tendencies and how they interact with situational cues (Doris, 2002; Miller, 2013).

Varieties of Character. The philosopher Jason Baehr (2017) recently distinguished four varieties of personal character: *moral, civic, intellectual* and *performance.* Moral character is marked by the possession of virtues that dispose to the well-being of others, to justice, fairness or other moral consideration. In this case virtues are the character strengths that orient to the moral dimensions of what it means to flourish. A person's civic character is marked by a concern for the well-being of the community in which one participates as a citizen, and might include virtues such as tolerance, respect and civility. Intellectual character is marked by virtues (e.g., open-mindedness, curiosity, intellectual humility) critical for the pursuit and delivery of epistemic goods such as truth, knowledge and understanding.

Moral, civic and intellectual characters share at least two things in common. They each involve character strengths, or virtues, that make it possible to live well the life that is good for one to live as neighbor (moral character), citizen (civic character) and educated person (intellectual character). Moreover, the motivation to pursue these goods is driven by intrinsic considerations, for example, out of a concern for the well-being of another (moral character), for one's community or nation (civic character) or the pursuit of knowledge and truth as a good thinker or learner (intellectual character). Of course the work of these virtues is not orthogonal. Character strengths often do double-duty. The intellectual dispositions to keep an open-mind and to treat rival views with generosity and humility will overlap with moral dispositions to treat others with respect. The civic dispositions to advance communal goals will overlap with intellectual virtues of discernment of political platforms, respect for evidence, attentiveness to civic concerns; and moral dispositions to advance the cause of justice in the community.

The fourth component of personal character involves the cultivation of performance virtues, which are the character strengths required to achieve excellence in some performance environment, such as school or work. Performance character is often invoked in school-based character education when there is frequent reference to dispositions of tenacity, to grit, perseverance, patience, self-discipline. In their new paradigm for high school education, Lickona and Davidson (2005) argued that performance character should matter as much as moral character. Without performance character young people will be unable to develop

their talents; without moral character they will be unable to lead an ethical life. But an emphasis on performance virtues also raises concerns insofar as these virtues lack the motivational structure of moral, civic and intellectual virtues (Baehr, 2017). The virtues of performance character are instrumental and can be cultivated for a wide variety of purposes. One could just as well put the performance virtues to nefarious as to moral ends; to villainy as to purposes that advance ethical, civic or intellectual goals.

That said it is easy to see that whole-hearted pursuit of moral, civic and intellectual goals will also need the character strengths of performance virtues. Developing excellence in tenacity and self-discipline, in keeping one's eye-on-the-prize, in staying focused and determined, will be needed to master challenging contexts of all kinds. Indeed, most pursuits that conduce to a good life lived well will require smooth integration of different kinds of character strengths. Consider two examples from character education: The Smart and Good High School framework (Lickona & Davidson, 2005) and the Character Report Card used by KIPP Academy schools.

The character strengths touted by the Smart-and-Good High School framework include critical thinking, diligence, social-emotional skills, ethical thinking, respectful and responsible moral agency, self-discipline, democratic citizenship and spirituality (understood as crafting a life of noble purpose). This schedule of character strengths is clearly a mélange of virtues of different kinds: *moral* virtues (ethical thinking, respectful and responsible moral agency), *civic* virtues (citizenship), *intellectual* virtues (critical thinking) and *performance* virtues (diligence, self-discipline).

The character report cards issued by KIPP Academy schools similarly feature a variety of personal character strengths: Zest (actively participates, shows enthusiasm), Grit (finishes what one starts; tries hard even after failure; works independently with focus), Self-Control-School Work (comes to class prepared, pays attention, resists distraction, follows direction, doesn't procrastinate), Self-Control-Interpersonal (remains calm when criticized or provoked; allows others to speak without interruption; is polite to peers/adults), Optimism (gets over frustrations and setbacks, believes effort will improve outcomes), Gratitude (recognizes and shows appreciation to others, recognizes and appreciates opportunities), Social Intelligence (able to find solutions to interpersonal conflict, demonstrates respect for feelings of others; knows how to include others), and Curiosity (eager to experience new things, asks and answers questions to deepen understanding). Clearly the KIPP report card also covers a variety of personal character virtues: *Moral* (Gratitude), *Civic* (Social intelligence), *Intellectual* (Curiosity, Self-Control-Work), *Performance* (Grit, Zest, Optimism).

Hence, while performance virtues are not an unalloyed good insofar as they can drive problematic as much as praiseworthy endeavors, still they are a necessary part of moral formation so that any account of moral personality development will need to account for how performance virtues can be turned in the direction of moral, civic and intellectual purposes, or, alternatively, how performance virtues can do double duty as companions to the other virtues of personal character.

Character and Culture. In his magisterial attempt to repair the intelligibility of virtue, Alasdair McIntyre (1984) argued that the meaning of virtue terms is never fixed and invariant but is linked instead to the sociology of particular historical epochs. Cultures, too, may require different schedules of virtue to fit one for the socio-ecological exigencies of particular settings. The point of virtue is to flourish, the goal is *eudemonia*; but the dispositional excellences that conduce to flourishing is laced with cultural meaning. In China, for example, Confucian virtues are regarded as cultural ideals (Shek, Yu, & Fu, 2013). These include loyalty ("zhong"), filial piety ("xiao"), benevolence ("ren"), affection ("ai"), trustworthiness ("xin"), harmony ("he"), peace ("ping"), propriety ("li"), wisdom ("zhi"), integrity ("lian") and shame/humility ("chi").

Although Confucian virtues are not inexplicable to the Western imagination, and, indeed, overlap (for example) with some of the 29 character strengths assessed by the Values-in-Action Inventory used in studies of positive youth development (Park & Peterson, 2006), still there are cultural differences in the boundary between self and other that encourage different priorities in the socialization of personal character (Tu, 1985). These differences are manifested in how Asian and American youth define the self (Kitayama, Markus & Matsumoto, 1985; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990), think about learning (Li,

2005) or react to situations that evoke morally-relevant emotions such as guilt, shame and pride (Stipek, 1998).

Hence the relevance of culture draws attention to both continuity and variation among diverse ethno-cultural groups whose history and form of life set different priorities in the schedule of virtues required to gain eudaimonia (Wang et al., 2016; Seider et al, 2013). There are plural conceptions of virtues because the ends and purposes of life are variously conceived across cultures and religious traditions (e.g., Bucar, 2015; Flanagan, 2015; Slingerland, 2015); and across rival ethical traditions (MacIntyre, 1984). At the same time, there is a common belief across Eastern and Western philosophical traditions that a person should practice moral self-cultivation, a goal that is psychologically questionable without help from others (Slote, 2016). Indeed, the cultivation of a moral self is a community effort in that the particular culture, society and parents all take a hand in bringing it about.

The cultural variability in schedules of virtues should not obscure a universal of moral development, which is that all parents, of whatever time and place, want to raise children who are in trait-possession of important virtues, and that mechanisms of socialization must account for how children come to learn and live out the culturally-relevant script. Lene Arnett Jensen (2012) described culture as a "symbolic and behavioral inheritance that members of a community share and co-construct" (p. 99). The symbolic inheritance includes conceptions of persons and society; the behavioral inheritance is routines of family and social practice. The challenge for the science of moral development is to explain how shared and co-constructed conceptions of moral character are instantiated in the habitual routines of family life; and how children come to take on these conceptions as dispositional features of a moral self.

To sum up: Contemporary moral development research is increasingly focused on understanding the dispositional features of moral behavior. This has drawn renewed attention to the traditional categories of character and virtue. Personal character comes in varieties, for example, moral, civic, intellectual and performance character. Each variety is marked by a slate of virtues that motivate behavior in these domains. Virtues are excellences of persons that fit us for generic human activities characteristic of particular cultures. Although different cultures may prioritize certain virtues over others, it is a universal of human development that children come to embody at least some of them. The challenge of moral development research is to give an account of how this happens.

How is it, for example, that children come to take on the symbolic inheritances of culture as dispositional features of character? How do they learn the script and internalize the lesson so that moral virtues reflect personal character? How do children put the virtues of performance character in the service of moral, civic and intellectual ends? We think a social cognitive approach to personality has significant resources to begin addressing these questions. A moral person, on this account, is one whose self-identity is constructed on moral foundations, a construction that begins in the early weeks of life.

In the next section, we take up some developmental considerations on the importance of early life in personal character development. In particular, we examine the work of Narvaez (2014, 2016) on the importance of the "evolved developmental niche" in setting up later trajectories of character formation; of Emde and colleagues (Emde, 2016; Emde et al, 1991) on the biological motives that underlie the moral self of infancy; of Kochanksa (2002) on the mutual responsive orientation that underlies the development of conscience; and work by Sommerville (2015) on moral character development in infancy.

Moral Formation in Infancy

Evolved Developmental Niche. Narvaez (2014) argues that early brain development lays the groundwork for the moral dispositional tendencies associated with moral character. For example, research in affective neuroscience documents how emotional circuitry design is shaped by early life experience (Panksepp, 1998). With only 25% of the brain developed at birth, caregivers in early life co-construct with infants the brain's emotion structures and circuits. Given a child's relative immaturity at birth (compared to other animal species), many human brain and body systems set their parameters and thresholds (e.g., the stress response) postnatally in interaction with the rearing environment. The manner in which emotion systems are fostered in early life will influence how socio-emotional events are understood, and come to influence later personality formation (Schore, 2003a, 2003b), cognitive development

(Greenspan & Shanker, 2004) and moral functioning (Narvaez, 2008, 2014, 2016).

Part of the neurobiological development of the infant brain reflects epigenetics—the shaping of gene expression during sensitive periods. Michael Meaney (2001, 2010) has shown that there is a window for the epigenetic effects of positive touch in rat pups. Hundreds of genes are affected by how much a rat mother licks the pup in the first 10 days of life (in humans, this would be the equivalent of physical touch in the first 6 months). In his research Meaney focused extensively on one set of genes related to controlling anxiety. Pups with low nurturing maternal care during that period never properly "turn on" the genes to control anxiety, leaving them anxious in new situations for the rest of life. Similar genetic effects (e.g., methylation on glucocorticoid receptor proteins in the hippocampus) have been found in human beings.

Humans inherit a host of things through evolution, including genes, but also a nest for offspring that matches up with the maturational schedule of the young (Oyama, Griffiths & Gray, 2001). Early developmental experience is optimized when infants are reared within a species-typical nest prepared by evolution (Narvaez, 2014). Humanity's evolved nest, or evolved developmental niche (EDN), reflects recurrent patterns found in nomadic foraging communities all over the world (the type of society in which humanity spent 99% of its history; although some people collapse prehistoric groups—complex hunter-gatherers, tribes, chiefdoms--- into "hunter-gatherers" and point to their violence [Pinker,2011], nomadic foragers or small-band hunter-gatherers are mobile groups with few possessions, no domesticated animals or cultivation of plants or hierarchy, with flexible boundaries and next to no violence; see Fry, 2006, 2013; Fry & Söderberg, 2013; Fry & Souillac, 2017).

For young children the EDN includes soothing perinatal experiences (e.g., no induced distress or maternal separation), breastfeeding on request for 2-5 years, affectionate touch (babies are held, carried, rocked and kept within reach), responsivity to infant needs in order to mitigate distress (baby's gestures are responded to with warmth and sensitivity), self-directed free play with multi-age playmates and positive social support whereby infants are deeply embedded in rich context of social relationships with care extended to other individuals, including fathers, grandmothers and other allomothers in the rearing environment (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005). Perhaps more importantly and nearly unique for humans are multiple responsive adult caregivers that support the mother-baby dyad, who are never isolated (Hrdy, 2009). Converging evidence suggests that the human species-typical nest is associated with health and well-being (for reviews, see Narvaez, Panksepp, Schore & Gleason, 2013; Narvaez, Valentino, Fuentes, McKenna & Gray, 2014; Narvaez, Braungart-Rieker, Miller-Graff, Gettler & Hastings, 2016).,

With respect to character development, a child whose early life provides the full nest will form a different set of implicit schemas for interacting in the social world than a child who experiences repeated and extensive stressors in early life. With a species-typical childhood, the child will develop flexible, relationally attuned skills that allow agility in social life. With a species-*a*typical childhood, the child will display self-dysregulation and have various degrees of stress reactivity and underdeveloped sociality. Individuals undercared for in early life will display a varying set of problems depending on when the stress occurred—what systems were developing—and how intense or enduring they were in early life. Among communities that provide the evolved nest, moral characters are peaceable rather than self-protective, receptively intelligent rather than narrow minded, communally imaginative instead of detached or vicious (for review, see Narvaez, 2013; 2016). In studies of preschool children's moral development, maternal reports of EDN-consistent care are related to higher scores on including empathy, self-regulation and conscience (e.g., Narvaez, Wang, Gleason, Cheng, Lefever & Deng, 2013).

Triune Ethics Theory. Narvaez (2008, 2009, 2016) developed a Triune Ethics Theory to describe three basic moral orientations that emerge from variability of care in the EDN: the ethics of self-protection, engagement and imagination. Each orientation has neurobiological roots that are apparent in the structures and circuitry of the human brain (MacLean, 1990). The emotional circuitry established early in life underpins the brain's architecture for morality and ethical behavior, influencing the display of moral dispositions and the possibility of moral behavior. The three ethics can be described as central motives in the event-feature-emotion complexes that drive moral cognition. When a particular ethical orientation is activated, it is presumed to influence perception,

information-processing, goal-setting and affordances (Moll et al., 2002; Moll, de Oliveira-Souza, & Zahn, 2009).

The ethic of self-protection emphasizes safety and personal or in-group dominance. When activated a person will have a difficult time orienting to the needs of others and instead prioritize the moral claims of the in-group. The ethic of engagement is oriented to face-to-face emotional affiliation with others, especially through caring relationships and social bonds. When active, it will focus on the needs of others and motivate compassionate action on their behalf. Physiologically, the protectionist ethic and engagement ethic are based in incompatible neurobiological systems. The former is related to increased stress hormones that tie up organism energy for fight-or-flight, while the latter is related to the calming hormones that fuel trust for others. The ethic of imagination is represented in the most recently evolved part of the brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex which integrates information from the outside world with information internal to the organism itself (Goldberg, 2002). It can be rooted either in engagement (communal imagination) or protectionism (vicious or detached imagination). Communal imagination uses the full manifold of reasoning capacities to adapt to ongoing social relationships and provides the capacity for problem-solving and deliberative learning. TET suggests that the real work of moral judgment and decision-making has to do with the coordination of instincts (protectionism), intuitions (engagement ethic) and reasoning and goals by the deliberative mind (imagination ethic). Indeed, recent research shows that adults who report having a childhood consistent with the evolved developmental niche are more likely to have high scores on indicators of engagement and communal imagination (Narvaez, Wang & Cheng, 2016).

Moral Self, Conscience, Character. Robert Emde and colleagues were pioneers in viewing infancy as the proper developmental place to look for the emergence of the moral self (Emde et al, 1991). On their view the origin of the moral self is linked to five biologically prepared motives that are built into the human species by evolution and then consolidated into an affective core. The five motives include the basic tendency to explore and extend mastery ("Activity"), the propensity to regulate physiology and behavior in accord with built in developmental goals ("Self-Regulation"), the motive to initiative, maintain and terminate interactions, say, by regulating the behavior of caregivers through gaze/smiling, behavioral synchrony and joint visual attention ("Social Fittedness"), monitoring experiences according to what is pleasurable, including exchange of emotional information with caregivers through social referencing ("Affective Monitoring") and seeking out the novel to make it familiar ("Cognitive Assimilation").

But the affective core requires a responsive rearing context for optimum development. Inborn biological propensities are progressively organized in the context of expectable infant-caregiver relationship experiences that result in the rudiments of a moral self: a sense of behavioral reciprocity, attention to norm violations (and hence appreciation of norms) and a capacity for empathy sharing. The view that biologically-prepared motives drive the affective core of the infant moral self was underappreciated at the time it was published, as it was out of fashion in the context of the rational-cognitive preoccupations of moral stage theory. Yet the view now seems prophetic of more recent claims that there is an innate moral sense on display in infancy (Hamlin, 2013) and also innately prepared moral intuitions (Haidt & Kasebir, 2010) shared with but also extended from primates (Warneken & Tomasello, 2007). Emde's work drew attention to the important role of relational synchronies, shared positive affect, and supportive parental facilitating environments for building the foundation of conscience (Laible & Thompson, 2000); and for underscoring the fact that moral formation is a biosocial achievement of epigenetic neurobiological development (Narvaez, 2016).

The relational synchrony between infant and caregiver in the facilitating environment of the evolved developmental nest is invoked by Kochanska and her colleagues (Kochanska, 2002; Kochanska et al., 2004; Kochanska, Aksan & Koenig, 1995) in their impressive research program on the development of conscience. They focus in particular on the aspect of parental responsivity which they call a mutual responsive orientation (MRO). The MRO is characterized by shared positive affect, mutually coordinated enjoyable routines ("good times") and a "cooperative interpersonal set" that describes the joint willingness of parent(s) and child to initiate and reciprocate relational overtures. A robust MRO orients the child to be receptive to parental influence so that the child is eager to comply with parental expectations, norms and values which, in turn motivates moral internalization and the work of conscience (Kochanska, 1997).

This was documented in a longitudinal study that showed that children who had experienced a highly responsive relationship with mothers over the first 24 months of life strongly embraced maternal prohibitions and gave evidence of strong self-regulation skills at preschool (Kochanska, Aksan, Prisco & Adams, 2008). Indeed, the quality of emotional security appears to set up positive and negative developmental cascades from infancy to pre-adolescence. For example, in one study emotional security in mother-child dyads (measured at age 8) mediated the relationship between a history of MRO (measured at 38-, 52-, 67- and 80-months of age) and cooperation with maternal monitoring and school competence at age 10 (Kim, Boldt, & Kochanska, 2015). On the other hand, in dyads where children were assessed as insecurely attached in infancy, children's history of negativity (rejection of parental rules and modeling attempts) measured at five time points between 25-67 months of age was related to poor developmental outcomes at ages 10 and 12, suggesting that early relational experiences of attachment security and insecurity are carried forward to influence later developmental achievements (Boldt, Kochanska & Jonas, 2017). Infant insecurity appears to amplify developmental cascades towards poor outcomes, but attachment security with at least one parent defuses the risk (Kochanska & Kim, 2013).

The movement from the MRO and secure attachment to committed compliance to moral internalization is also expected to influence the child's emerging internal representation of the moral self. As Kochanska (2002) put it:

> "Children with a strong history of committed compliance with the parent are likely gradually to come to view themselves as embracing the parent's values and rules. Such a moral self, in turn, comes to serve as the regulator of future moral conduct and, more generally, of early morality" (p. 340).

In one longitudinal study (Kochanska, Koenig, Barry, Kim & Yoon, 2010) children's internalization of each parent's rules and empathy towards a parent (who feigned distress in a laboratory paradigm) was observed at roughly 2 years, 3 years, and 4 years of age. At roughly 5 and a half years of age children were administered a moral-self assessment; and at roughly six and a half years of age children were assessed by parents and teachers on a wide assortment of competence and adjustment measures, including ratings of school engagement, peer relations, prosocial and problem behavior, opposition defiance and callous-unemotional traits. The moral-self assessment involved two puppets anchoring opposite ends of 31 items. The items reflected conscience concerns such as internalization of rules, apology, and empathy. A child was presented with a brief scenario, with one puppet urging one option and the other puppet another option ("with equally self-serving voices"). For example, one puppet might say "When I break something, I try to hide it so no one finds out." The second puppet would say "When I break something, I tell someone right away." The child would then be asked "What about you? Do you try to hide something that you broke, or do you tell someone right away?"

The results showed that children who as toddlers and preschoolers had a strong history of internalized out-of-sight compliance with parental rules were competent, engaged, and prosocial at 80 months of age, with very little evidence of antisocial problems; and the moral self was the mediator that accounted for these relationships. Children at 67 months who were highly moral were rated at 80 months as highly competent and prosocial, and they showed little trace of callous, antisocial problems. Kochanska et al. (2010) suggested that the moral self might exercise its inner guidance role because moral schemes are highly accessible and automatically activated, an explanation that trades on social cognitive approaches to the moral self (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004), a view we take up below.

Jessica Sommerville's (2015) research program is a promising recent approach to the study of morality in infancy. Her lab documents five interesting findings: 1) infants at 15 months are sensitive to the fair distribution of things; 2) infants prefer social actors who are fair (they also prefer actors who are prosocial rather than antisocial, see Hamlin & Wynn, 2011); 3) this preference for the fairness norm is a developmental phenomenon insofar as it is not evident at 6 months and is transitional at 9 months; 4) these findings cannot be attributed to statistical learning of perceived regularities; and 5) children tolerate inequality and unfairness so long as the familiar "in-group" is favored. Sommerville (2015) suggests two socialization mechanisms that underlie individual differences in early developmental appreciation of the fairness norm: 1) opportunities for infants to share in naturalistic settings, say, during play episodes with parents; and 2) certain qualities of parents, such as their self-reported

empathy. Once again the development of moral personality characteristics in infancy, whether self, character, or conscience, requires parenting of a certain kind.

Moral Self-Identity

We have seen how morally-relevant dispositional features of self, character and conscience are laid down in the nexus of parent-child interactions in the early months of infancy. The moral dimensions of personality will expand and take on greater significance over the rest of the lifecourse; and the theoretical and empirical literatures of personality science will be crucial for understanding how this happens (Hill & Roberts, 2010; Lapsley & Hill, 2009). Two literatures are of special interest: Big Five and social cognitive approaches to personality.

Big Five and Moral Identity. Dan McAdams (2015) argued that broad dispositional traits associated with the Big Five are assembled out of inborn biological tendencies associated with infant temperament. The traits extraversion and neuroticism, for example, are prefigured by the infant's positive and negative emotionality, respectively. The emergence of self-regulation, effortful control and conscience is linked to the executive attention network of the pre-frontal cortex and anterior cingulate gyrus, out of which emerges the trait dimensions of agreeableness (motivated by empathy) and conscientiousness (motivated by guilt). By early childhood recognizable traits are on display by the young social actor who performs emotions in characteristic ways on the family stage. By the end of childhood, the social actor will have taken an agentic stance towards his or her projects, plans and values; and by adulthood the social agent will want to write the script as well as perform it. Personality development will take an authorial turn during young adulthood when the self-as-author begins to draft identity-creating narratives that will subjected to continuous updating and revision throughout the life course. The self as actor, agent and author are three pivotal moments as personality thickens over the lifespan (McAdams, 2015)

McAdams's (2015) narrative approach to personality development has found traction in moral psychology. Krettenauer and Hertz (2015) argued that a conception of the moral self is one of the identity-creating narratives that is attempted (and for the first time) in adolescence and young adulthood; and that one should look for developmental change across the ensuing decades of adulthood in unfolding narratives of moral responsibility, in the context dependence and integration of self-importance of moral values, and growth in moral internalization. In one cross-sectional study Krettenauer, Murua and Jia (2016) showed that mean level moral identity did, in fact, increase throughout the adult years but there was a shift in the values that participants deemed important for defining a highly moral person. For example, benevolence, self-direction and rule conformity tended to become more important for older individuals when defining their moral identity, while tolerance and achievement became less important. Moral identity (particularly internalization of morality as opposed to external virtue signaling) is also associated with positive moral emotions (Krettenauer & Casey, 2015); and moral identity influences the way we remember the moral and immoral events of our life, suggesting that moral identity is deeply implicated in autobiographical reasoning (Krettenauer & Mosleh, 2013).

It is certainly true that moral identity is a particularly crucial developmental challenge for adolescents and young adults. Identity development, at its very core, is a project of moral formation. It is a project of figuring out what one's life is for; of determining the pattern of personal identifications best suited to live a life of purpose and meaning (Lapsley & Hardy, 2017). Indeed, Erikson (1968, p. 39) argued that an ethical capacity is the "true criterion of identity," and that "identity and fidelity are necessary for ethical strength" (Erikson, 1963, p. 126). This suggests that moral identity is the clear goal of both moral and identity development and that the two developmental tracks are ideally conjoined in adult personality. Indeed, moral identity may be the stronger predictor of prosocial life outcomes than other indicators of identity (Hardy, Nadal & Schwartz, 2017).

Yet how do we get from the moral self, character and conscience of infancy to the moral self-identity of adulthood? How do we think of virtues as psychological constructs, and in way that helps us understand cultural variability in schedules of virtues as targets of socialization? We think a social cognitive view of dispositional coherence can do some of the heavy lifting with respect to these questions.

Social Cognition and Moral Identity. A social cognitive approach to personality views cognition as a broader set of mental representations, processes and mechanisms than was postulated by the moral development tradition. Social cognitive units are within-individual cognitive-affective units that includes *knowledge structures* that are used to encode features of situations, *self-reflective* processes through which individuals construct self-beliefs and attributions which contributes to affective and behavioral tendencies, and *self-regulatory* processes through which individuals set goals, evaluate progress and maintain a motivational focus (Bandura,1999). According to Cantor (1990) scripts, schemas and prototypes (among other social cognitive constructs) are the "cognitive carriers of dispositions" that are organized around particular aspects of experience. Social cognitive schemes guide appraisal of social situations, memory for events, and affective reactions. They "demarcate regions of social life and domains of personal experience to which the person is especially tuned, and about which he or she is likely to become a virtual 'expert'" (Cantor, 1990, p. 738).

Social cognitive theory draws attention, then, to cognitive-affective mechanisms that influence social perception, but these mechanisms also serve to create and sustain patterns of individual differences. If schemas are easily primed and readily activated ("chronically accessible") then they direct attention selectively to certain features of experience. This selective framing disposes one to select schema-compatible tasks, goals and settings that canalize and maintain our dispositional tendencies (Cantor, 1990). From this perspective Lapsley and Narvaez (2004b) claim that a moral person, or a person who has a moral identity or character, is one for whom moral (social-cognitive) schemas are chronically accessible and easily activated by situational cues. Chronically accessible moral schemas provide a dispositional readiness to discern the moral dimensions of experience, as well as to underwrite the discriminative facility in selecting situationally appropriate behavioral responses.

Similarly, Karl Aquino and colleagues (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim & Felps, 2009) argue that the self-concept is a network of heterogeneous moral and non-moral identity schemes, but not all of them can be active in working memory at any one time. Whether any of them is influential is partly a function of how trait accessibility interacts with situational cues, which can activate or deactivate the accessibility of moral identity, or else active some other identity at odds with morality. Hence situations are crucial to any social cognitive theory of virtue. A situation that primes or activates the accessibility of moral identity strengthens the motivation to act morally. Situational factors that decrease accessibility weaken moral motivation.

An impressive empirical record documents the central claims of moral self-identity theory (e.g., Lapsley, 2016; Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016; Jennings, Mitchell & Hannah, 2015; Shao, Freeman & Aquino, 2008). Indeed, we are aware of no other approach to moral personality that has done as well. In their meta-analysis of 111 studies from a broad range of academic fields, Hertz and Krettenauer (2016) reported that moral identity was a significant predictor of behavioral outcomes, including prosocial behavior and the avoidance of antisocial behavior. There was also a slight cultural effect, with so-called individualistic cultures reporting higher effect sizes than so-called collectivist cultures. They concluded that moral identity appears to strengthen the readiness to engage in ethical and prosocial behavior.

Moral identity has also been folded into broader conceptualizations of moral character. For example, Taya Cohen and colleagues (Cohen & Panter ,2016; Cohen & Morse, 2014; Cohen, Panter, Turan, Morse & Kim, 2014) have proposed a tripartite model of moral character that includes *motivation* (a disposition towards considering the needs and interests of others), *ability* (a disposition towards effective self-regulation) and *moral identity* (a disposition towards valuing morality and viewing the self as a moral person). Using latent profile analysis of a battery of assessments that included personality traits, guilt-and-shame proneness and moral identity, Cohen et al. (2014) showed that individual differences in moral character had robust effects on employee behavior. On the basis of both self-report and co-worker report, employees with low moral character demonstrated more counterproductive workplace behavior (CWB), committed more delinquent behavior and had a more lenient attitude towards workplace deviance than did individuals with high moral character. Interestingly, cognitive moral reasoning was not diagnostic of employee behavior, nor was behavior much influenced by whether organizations had statements of values or codes-of-ethics.

One lesson of this research program is that moral character is a complex construct of personality traits, self-regulatory mechanisms and moral internalization. Another is that investigations of moral character will require meaningful integration of both Big Five and social cognitive approaches to personality; and that moral identity will be integral to the its conceptualization. But there is one more instructive lesson. To put it in the language of virtue used earlier: even the work of moral identity will require *moral* virtues (the motivational orientation towards the interests and needs of others) and *performance* virtues (the disposition to self-regulation).

Social Cognitive Development of Moral Identity. But there is still the matter of development to consider. If moral identity really is a developmental moment for adolescence and adulthood, as Krettenauer and Hertz (2015) insist, how do we get there from the moral self, character and conscience of infancy that we reviewed earlier? How do we account for individual and cultural differences in the schedule and priority of character strengths that are targets of socialization? A social cognitive approach to moral personality has resources to address these issues. It draws attention to how children's event representations are progressively elaborated with caregivers in the dialogic "web of interlocution" (to borrow a phrase from Taylor, 1989) with parents. Children learn how to structure the events of their life into narrative form by the kinds of questions that parents ask of past events ("Where did we go yesterday?" "What did we see?" "Who was there?" "What did we do next"?). There is now substantial evidence that adult-guided reminiscing is a powerful way for children to learn how to narrate their past experience (Fivush, Sales & Bohanek, 2008); and folding episodic event representations into autobiographical memory is a key step in self-development because these memories come to reference a self whose story it is (Bohanek, Marin, Fivush & Duke, 2006).

Of course, parental interrogatives are deployed not only to reminisce with children but to correct, encourage and otherwise socialize for proper conduct and comportment as required by the expectations of culture. They help children learn the scripts for how to treats others, when apology is required, how to show gratitude, what is involved in demonstrating filial piety and benevolence, what it means to take responsibility. Parental interrogatives provide a scaffold to help children identify the salient features of an experience and their significance for the several types of personal character. A sense of morality can become part of the child's autobiographical narrative to the extent that parents reference norms, standards and values in their dialogical interactions; or encourage action guiding scripts that become frequently practiced, over-learned, routine, habitual and automatic, and in this way, encourage the formation of social cognitive schemas that are chronically accessible for appraising the social landscape.

The plausibility of this dialogic model for the socialization of the moral self is attested by literatures on the development of conscience, on the development of socio-personality dispositions, autobiographical memory and the narrative self in early family life (Thompson & Lavine, 2016). Thompson (1998) noted, for example, that in shared dialogues children learn important lessons "about emotions, relationships and morality" (p. 70); and that the emergence and elaboration of prototypic knowledge structures is a foundation for early socio-personality development. In one study (Laible & Thompson, 2000) mothers and their 4-year old children conversed about the child's good and bad behavior and were then independently observed on out-of-site compliance tasks used in conscience research. The child's later cooperative conduct was most strongly associated with mother's reference to people's emotion and intentions in conversation and to the frequency of mother's moral evaluative language (e.g., describing something as a 'nice thing to do'). Interestingly, the frequency of mother's reference to rules and to rule violations was not related to the child's compliance. In another study features of maternal conversation with 2 ½ year olds was related to conscience development six months later (Laible & Thompson, 2004). Once again, mothers frequent reference to people's feelings was associated with conscience but reference to behavioral consequences of rule violation was not. As Thompson and Lavine (2016, p. 107) put it, "early conscience development is associated not with the reiteration of behavioral expectations and consequences of rule violations, but rather by parent-child conversation that links desirable or undesirable conduct to human concerns—people's feelings—within a context of moral appraisal."

Future Directions

In this chapter, we argued that the dispositional properties of moral character can be powerfully described by a social cognitive theory of moral self-identity. Insofar as the history of science can act as an intervention on contemporary practice of a research tradition (Lapsley, in press), we first placed the problem of character and virtue within the historical context of the moral stage theory paradigm to explain why the language of virtue and personal character has been so long absent from the research agenda in moral development. Moral development will increasingly countenance a pact between virtue theory and personality and developmental science. The conceptual analysis of virtue and character will have to square with well-attested theories of personality development, and this will require intentional translational work at the "mending wall" of psychology and ethics (Lapsley, 2016).

Fortunately, such work is already underway (Miller, Furr, Knobel, & Fleeson, 2015). We've already noted Cohen's tripartite model of moral character which can be understood as dynamic blend of moral identity, moral and performance virtues. Take another example: Noftle (2015) showed in a longitudinal study that three aspects of character are moderately to strongly related in emerging adulthood: trait-like behavioral tendencies, moral self-attributes and character strivings (chronically activated motivations). Similarly, Fleeson and colleagues carve out a role for social cognitive mechanisms in their understanding of the personality foundations of character (Fleeson, Furr, Jayawickreme, Helzer, Hartley & Meindl, 2015). Whole trait theory considers social cognitive mechanisms the explanatory side of traits (Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015); and from the perspective of the Cybernetic Big Five, traits are saturated with situational specificity and require eliciting conditions that social cognitive capacities are likely to notice (DeYoung, 2015).

The historic objection to character development from the perspective of moral stage theory was that the adjective "moral" did not always precede "character" and that some dispositional features could just as well attach to immoral ends as moral ones. A second objection is that trait-talk provides aid-and-comfort to ethical relativism. We noted that personal character does come in moral, civic, intellectual and performance varieties, and that most of the anxiety stemming from the first objection arises with the notion of performance character. Yet we argued that virtues across the several varieties of personal character do double duty, and one could not get very far in one's moral (civic or intellectual) exertions without animating performance virtues. Moreover, any adequate account of character development will have to show how it is that the virtues of performance character can be turned in the direction of moral and prosocial ends in the formation of the moral self. We argued that moral self-identity and the manner of its construction and development, is precisely the compass that could orient the work of character strengths toward morality.

The ethical relativism objection to character has had an outsized and pernicious influence on the evolution of the moral development research tradition, as we tried to show. Yet the language of virtues, traits, character, and dispositions are ubiquitous. It is deeply implicated in the way we think about socialization and our own experience as persons; and to ignore it is to give up on empirical realities crucial for understanding moral life. Moreover, the anxiety over ethical relativism is misplaced in any event. MacIntyre (1984) defined virtue as "an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods internal to practice and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods" (p. 191). Virtues are required to achieve any of the generic human ends to which we aspire; and to achieve any good at all we have to submit ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners. He writes:

> We have to learn to recognize what is due to whom; we have to be prepared to take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way; and we have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for the facts. In other words we have to accept as necessary components of any practice with internal goods and standards of excellence the virtues of justice, courage and honesty (p. 191).

And this is so even though societies might have different codes of justice, courage and honesty. MacIntrye (1984) notes, by way of example, that Lutheran pietist parents (like Kant's) brought up children to tell the truth no matter the cost. In Bantu society, however, children are enjoined not to tell the truth to strangers for fear this makes the family vulnerable to witchcraft. "In our own culture," he writes, "many of us have been brought

up not to tell the truth to elderly great-aunts who invite us to admire their new hats" (p. 193). But his point is that these codes all acknowledge the virtue of truthfulness; and that a similar account could be given about justice, courage or any of the virtues. In some ways, this argument for the universality of virtues is not dissimilar to the one offered by moral stage theorists regarding the universality of deontic morality, viz., that apparent cross-culture differences in the content of moral reasoning nonetheless reflects universality in the structure of thought.

But the very fact that different societies and cultures, or different historical epochs, prioritize a different schedule of virtues does require a developmental theory of how this is accomplished. We think that a social cognitive framework is up to the mark. The developmental moment of significance in the moral formation of virtue lies in the way children come to construct the social cognitive units of personality---the scripts, schemas, prototypes, expectations---of what is valued and significant given the exigencies of one's family, community and culture. Children in one culture might come to learn what filial piety demands, or what is owed to community and group solidarity, children in another might learn different lessons about individual autonomy, but each set of culture-bound lessons is learned in the facilitating environments of parent-child relationships that build chronically accessible dispositional schemas appropriate for eudaimonia.

Finally, we reviewed the development of character at two points in the lifespan. In keeping with much recent work in moral development, we focused on the development of moral self, conscience and character in infancy; and in keeping with a robust research tradition, we examined the moral identity construct in adolescence and adulthood. We argued that social cognitive theory also offers a developmental pathway from the moral self of infancy to the moral identity of adolescence, although the developmental accounts of Big Five personality development also has resources to this end. Showing how the moral development achievements of infancy conduce to moral self-identity across the lifespan, and building integrative accounts of dispositional traits and social cognitive units of moral personality, are exciting research possibilities for the future.

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